

Message Text

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15

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 NEA-10 ISO-00 PM-07 NSC-10 SPC-03 SS-20

RSC-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-04 USIA-15

PRS-01 L-03 DRC-01 (ISO) W
----- 089928

P R 131055Z JAN 74

FM AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 892

INFO AMEMBASSY RABAT

USINT ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USINT CAIRO

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L TRIPOLI 0048

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR LY TS

SUBJECT: LIBYAN REACTION TO NEW UNITY PROJECT

REF: TRIPOLI 0047

1. TRIPOLI SEEMED TO BE TAKEN COMPLETELY BY SURPRISE
BY ANNOUNCEMENT OF TUNISIAN-LIBYAN UNITY JANUARY 12.
CELEBRATIONS BEGAN WITH HASTILY ORGANIZED RALLY AT ASU
HEADQUARTERS AND FIREWORKS DISPLAY AND THERE IS TO BE
A PROCESSION TODAY IN THE STREETS OF TRIPOLI, WITH
COLONEL QADHAFI LEAVING DJERBA THIS MORNING TO MAKE A
TRIUMPHANT RETURN TO TRIPOLI BY CAR. ABU BAKR YUNIS,
CHIEF OF LIBYAN ARMED FORCES WAS STILL VISITING CHAD
JANUARY 12, AND THE PETMIN MABROUK MAY ALSO HAVE BEEN
TAKEN BY SURPRISE, AS HE GAVE AN INTERVIEW ON OIL TO
LOCAL PAPER YESTERDAY WHICH WILL BE SUBMERGED BY NEWS
OF UNION. ONLY TWO RCC MEMBERS ARE REPORTED TO HAVE
ACCOMPANIED QADHAFI TO DJERBA, QRAWI AND KHARUBI;
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NO SIGN THAT JALLUD PRESENT.

2. OUR INITIAL IMPRESSION IS THAT LIBYANS GENUINELY WELCOME NEWS OF "UNITY" TO CUT REMAINING TIES WITH "ARROGANT" EGYPTIANS, AND TO TURN LIBYA'S FACE TOWARD TUNISIANS WITH WHOM THEY FEEL THEY HAVE MORE IN COMMON. SENTIMENT IN BENGHAZI MAY DIFFER ALTHOUGH WE WOULD EXPECT THAT CYRENAICANS WOULD SHARE SATISFACTION AT CLEARING AIR WITH EGYPTIANS.

3. FOR QADHAFI, UNITY WITH TUNISIA MUST SEEM A WAY TO REGAIN SOME OF HIS BATTERED RESTIGE. FOREIGN POLICIES OF TWO STATES ARE SO DIFFERENT, IT IS DIFFICULT TO CONCEIVE HOW UNITY OBJECTIVE IN THIS SPHERE ALONE CAN BE ACHIEVED UNLESS UNION IS TO BE MERELY FORMAL EXERCISE. ON HOPEFUL SIDE, ANY INFLUENCE BOURGUIBA AND TUNISIANS HAVE ON QADHAFI'S DIEHARD OPPOSITION TO MIDEAST PEACE AND SUPPORT FOR TERRORISM WOULD BE IN RIGHT DIRECTION. BUT WE RECALL SAME HOPES WERE EXPRESSED FOR MERGER WITH EGYPT.
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